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THE HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF HEBREW RELIGION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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In every age the study of the Bible has been greatly influenced by the prevailing theological, philosophical, or scientific trend of thought. In an orthodox age and environment the Old Testament was interpreted from an orthodox standpoint; witness, for example, Puritan exegesis. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, J. D. Michaelis entitled the opening paragraph of his *Mosaïsches Recht*,¹ "The knowledge of Mosaic law is useful, if one wishes to philosophize about laws in general after the manner of Montesquieu."

The middle half of the nineteenth century was the age of scientific agnosticism and iconoclasm. Nothing was true which could not be proved absolutely. The rising natural sciences demanded that every realm of thought be governed by the principles which they laid down. From Thomas Paine to Ingersoll it was the fashion to apply the laws and established facts of natural science to the Old Testament narratives, in order to show that the latter must be false, and that orthodox religion, therefore, was unfounded, untrue, and misleading.

Both Old Testament and religion weathered the storm. And, as usual, the storm cleared the atmosphere. Freed from the shackles of many disproved dogmas, religion was enabled to take mighty strides forward. Loyal students of the Old Testament found themselves compelled and impelled as never before to analyze the contents of the Bible, to classify and co-ordinate, and to reinterpret the Bible in accordance

¹ Second ed., Reutlingen, 1785.

with scientific principles. The agnostics had shown quite clearly what the Old Testament was not, and that its authority was not altogether what orthodoxy had claimed. The science of Old Testament interpretation, born in this period of storm and stress, under the influence of the prevailing tendency toward unrestricted, scientific research, and largely out of the opposition of these natural scientists and the growing general consciousness of the insufficiency and inaccuracy of literal, unquestioning acceptance of the Old Testament narratives, accepted the challenge of the age, and set itself to establish upon scientific principles and through scientific research what the Bible really is, and how it may be interpreted authoritatively, positively, and constructively.

In the last half-century, more or less, Old Testament interpretation has devoted itself in the main to two specific problems: the establishment of a correct Old Testament text and the determination of the literary history of the Old Testament books. The best authenticated and most generally accepted solution of the latter problem has been commonly called "the documentary hypothesis." The term is inapt, first, because the word documentary conveys the rather misleading impression that every book of the Bible must be a collection of independent documents, worked together by an editor, and that the problem is finally solved when these original sources have been determined, and, second, because for the vast majority of Old Testament scholars the premises and conclusions of this so-called "hypothesis" have long since ceased to be hypotheses and have become, within certain broad limits, established, and, for the latest generation, almost axiomatic truths.

The determination within broad lines of the sources of the Hexateuch and of the other Old Testament books revolutionized the cognate fields of Old Testament science. In the early eighties began the new Old Testament history, archaeology, and theology.

Until this time the chief supplementary sources of Old Testament knowledge had been the classical writers, including Josephus and the church fathers. Occasionally some mite of information was adduced from a Syriac or Arabic source. The development of Assyriology marked a new departure in Old Testament historiography. At first enthusiastic Assyriologists naturally magnified the importance of their science and the significance of its discoveries. The extreme hypothesis of astral religion and pan-Babylonism arose. This, of course, aroused intense opposition on the part of some of the former leaders of biblical science. They looked with distrust upon Assyriology and its many extreme and ill-established conclusions and claims. Nor could many of them extend their own vision beyond their personal problems of textual emendation and delimitation of documents. Happily the last fifteen years have seen much of that first natural exaggeration, misunderstanding, and distrust disappear. We realize now that instead of there being anything hostile and irreconcilable between the contributions of Assyriology to biblical science and the earlier textual and documentary research and conclusions, they supplement each other. With their proper correlation, a new epoch has begun in our science, marked not only by a broader and deeper interpretation of biblical literature itself, and also by a larger and more correct reconstruction of Old Testament history, archaeology, and theology, but marked also by a thoroughgoing investigation of the origins and relationships of the Babylonians and Israelites, unmistakably kindred peoples, and of their religions, laws, literatures, and other cultural institutions. This work, so rich in promise, is still in its incipency.

In the last twenty years another important field of research has been developed. Although others before him had perceived the principle and had applied it here and there, Gunkel was the first who distinguished systematically the original form, early growth, and oral transmission through successive

generations of Hebrew myths, legends, and traditions, from their final, literary form preserved in the Old Testament.¹ Actually, this is merely an extension of the methods of the documentary hypothesis, a projection of written biblical literature into the remote periods of oral transmission, when, although still unwritten, it was literature none the less. In this way we are able to evaluate much of our biblical literature anew and more correctly, and to distinguish between myth, folk-tale, legend, and history, and thereby to extend considerably the range of Israel's cultural evolution.

During the last generation another science has developed which has never been exactly designated by any one title. Anthropology is altogether too broad and inclusive a term, while comparative religion is in one sense likewise too broad, and in another sense too narrow. Actually it is the scientific study of the comparative cultures of peoples, for the most part primitive, or of the early, historical period. It seeks to ascertain the common forces, biological, psychological, environmental, and historical, in the lives of these peoples which have determined their cultural evolution, and the origin and history of their institutions, social, economic, and religious, many of which have continued in some form or other into our own day, and still affect our modern religious and social belief and practice.

The pioneer in the application of the principles of this new science to Semitic life and religion was, of course, W. Robertson Smith. In fact *The Religion of the Semites* and *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* made him one of the recognized pioneers of the new science itself. Robertson Smith's chief merit lies in that he dared to be a pioneer in this new field rather than in the unfailing correctness of his conclusions. *The Religion of the Semites* was never completed, and some of his main hypotheses and conclusions have been proved unten-

¹ *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, 1895; *Genesis*, 1st ed. 1901, 2d ed. 1902, 3d ed. 1910.

able, notably those in regard to sacrifice and totemism among the Semites. This was to be expected. It would ask too much of a pioneer in any field of research that he furnish the correct and final answers to all the great and intricate problems which he is the first to propound.

Robertson Smith was really a generation too early to accomplish more than he did. Among the early Semites, possibly to a greater extent than among any other primitive people, religion was absolutely inseparable from life in general. A full and perfect understanding and presentation of Semitic religion necessitate a fairly full knowledge of Semitic life. Robertson Smith's chief sources were the Old Testament and Arabic and Syriac literatures, for Assyriology was then still in its infancy. These are important and indispensable sources, yet altogether too meager for the immense task to which he had devoted himself. A literature alone, no matter how vast, is insufficient to reconstruct fully the life and culture of an ancient people.

Similarly the Old Testament gives no full and adequate picture of the life of ancient Israel. Scarcely 5 per cent of the Old Testament comes from the Northern Kingdom, and yet the Northern Kingdom probably contained at least 75 per cent of the people of Israel. And the remaining 95 per cent of the Old Testament gives only a very one-sided picture of the daily life, beliefs, and practices of the Southern Kingdom. For all this literature, vast though it may seem, and unquestionably nationalistic in character, is composed, with the exception of a few old passages, entirely from a prophetic, priestly, or scribal point of view, and is consequently intensely subjective, instead of purely objective. A literal study of the Old Testament unfolds a picture of that ideal national and individual life which the prophets proclaimed and which the later priests and scribes sought to legislate and moralize into being, rather than that practical existence which the people actually lived day by day. Between prophetic and priestly life and religion

and folk-life and folk-religion there was a vast difference. And to comprehend the prophetic and priestly standpoints, activities and literatures completely, in other words to interpret the Old Testament correctly, we must know far more than merely the correct text of these prophetic and priestly writings and the approximate periods of the authors themselves and of their documents and the processes by which these were combined, edited, and collected, until the Old Testament came to be. All this is indispensable and basic. But our task is incomplete, and we cannot understand the Bible correctly nor interpret it authoritatively, until we have reconstructed the daily life of ancient Israel in all its manifold and complex phases.

We used to speak of Old Testament archaeology, i.e., the reconstruction of the life of ancient Israel almost entirely from Old Testament material, supplemented by a modicum of confirmatory and illustrative information, culled chiefly from the classics. The documentary hypothesis enabled us to distinguish in a general way between archaeological conditions in the successive epochs of Israel's literary history. But still the field was limited, and this was still only the archaeology of the Old Testament, the archaeology of a book, the fragmentary and one-sided picture which a restricted literature gave, rather than the full life of ancient Israel.

Now the field has expanded immeasurably. And in this task of reconstructing the life of ancient Israel the Old Testament, although the basis and ultimate goal, is hardly the starting-point of our investigation. Nor is this starting-point Assyrian-Babylonian literature, vast, complex, and illuminating though it is. Nor is it Arabic and Syriac literature, as Robertson Smith believed. In fact it is no literature at all.

The starting-point of this investigation must be the life which the Semitic nomad or Beduin lives today. The common expression, "the unchanging East" is, like most epigrammatic expressions, only approximately true. The Orient, and

even the nomad, have changed somewhat in the last few thousand years. But measured by this great expanse of time, and the radical changes it has seen in other civilizations, it may well be said that the life of the Semitic nomad is practically the same today as in Bible times. Even Islam has merely grazed its surface, but has hardly penetrated to its roots. Possibly history furnishes no more convincing illustration of the truth that national culture is largely the product of physical and economic environment, and that religion, especially in its early stages, far from being a primary determining force in the evolution of a culture, is merely an element thereof, and consequently also a product of this same environment and subject to the same laws of evolutionary growth as other correlative phases of this culture. Only secondarily is religion a force making for further cultural development.

One historical fact the Old Testament attests with absolute certainty, that before entrance into Palestine, whether under an Abraham, a Joshua, or various tribal leaders, Israel had dwelt out in the desert, and there had lived the simple, nomad life, the only life which the desert environment permits. In this stage of cultural evolution its economic institutions, religious concepts and practices, social organization, and moral and ethical principles must have been strikingly similar to those of the present-day Beduins. By correlating with the direct and specific information about early Israelite institutions, beliefs, and practices, which the Bible gives, all that we know of Beduin life, as described in Arabic literature, and in the works of modern travelers and observers, we are able to reconstruct fairly adequately the early life of the tribes of Israel in the period before they entered Palestine, and to determine very much of their earliest religious beliefs and practices, social organization, economic institutions, and moral ideas and principles. In this way such questions as the original conception of Yahwe and of other tribal deities, of taboo, sacrifice, circumcision, and kindred rites, of birth, marriage, and death

practices, of family, clan, and tribal organization, of the beginnings of law, of the functions of the priests, elders, heads of families, and military leaders, of hospitality, chastity, democracy, and other moral virtues can be answered, and from this starting-point it is not difficult to advance step by step in the unfolding of Israel's cultural history, and particularly in the history of Israel's religion.

To illustrate: One of the most interesting, as well as most important and difficult problems of biblical science is that of the origin and earliest conception of Yahwe. Most scholars have approached this problem from the philological side. They have attempted to determine the original conception of Yahwe by analyzing the name grammatically. The precariousness of this method is best shown by the multitude of mutually contradictory hypotheses which have been advanced, each quite as correct from the grammatical standpoint as the others.

Other scholars, with somewhat more reason, have combined with this method an analysis, or supposed analysis, of the Old Testament traditions bearing upon this question. But although theoretically this method of investigation has more scientific justification than the purely etymological, none the less its advocates have come to conclusions no less confused, contradictory, and ill-founded. Thus, for example, the hypothesis first advanced, I believe, by Eduard Meyer,¹ and more recently energetically advocated by Gressmann,² that Yahwe was originally a volcano deity, rests for the most part upon an interpretation of Exod. 3:1-6 and chapters 19-20 manifestly false because it fails to take due account of the composite character of these chapters, or rather, because it analyzes these chapters in accordance with its own preconceptions. Actually not one of the component sources, unless possibly the Elohist, contains anything which might even

¹ *Die Israeliten und Ihre Nachbarstämme*, pp. 69 ff.

² *Mose und Seine Zeit*, p. 468.

remotely suggest a volcano in action. Furthermore, I have found not a single instance nor even the slightest indication of the conception of a volcanic deity among any Semitic tribe or people. This is perfectly natural. Volcanic religion existed among the natives of Hawaii, just because volcanic activity played such an important rôle in their lives. But while volcanic activity was at one time common in western Asia, as witness possibly the Dead Sea region, and certainly the Hauran, the Leja, and other districts east of the Jordan, and also the Harras of northwestern Arabia, still this volcanic activity had ceased almost entirely long before the historical, or even the immediately pre-historical period of Semitic life. I have found but one or two references to volcanic eruption in Semitic literature, few enough to indicate that volcanic activity played an absolutely negligible rôle in Semitic life. Of course it might be argued that Yahwe-worship began in a tribe which dwelt in the vicinity of a still active volcano. But this would be a pure guess. And opposed to it would be the incontrovertible facts, (1) that in the period of the formation of primitive Semitic religious ideas no volcanoes seem to have been sufficiently active to have materially influenced the life of any Semitic tribe, and to have therefore directly affected primitive Semitic religious concepts; (2) that no comparable concepts of volcano deities seem to have existed among any other Semitic people; (3) that this hypothesis completely ignores the question of the daily life which a Semitic tribe must have lived in the desert, even though in the vicinity of an unknown and still occasionally active volcano, and which must have been the primary factor in determining its conceptions of deity and manner of worship; and (4) that it fails to consider the earliest rites and forms of Yahwe-worship as indicative of his original nature and function. Robertson Smith was far more correct and scientific when he undertook the study of early Semitic life, belief, and practice in general as the necessary preliminary to the investigation of all particular phases and problems

of Semitic religion. This must be the starting-point of the investigation of the question of the original conception of Yahwe.

Upon their entrance into Palestine the tribes of Israel, however they may have been associated and interrelated out in the desert, speedily resolved themselves into two distinct groups, determined by the topographical nature of the different parts of the country, and their effect upon the cultural life of the respective tribes or group of tribes. Southern Palestine, Judaea, is more rocky and sterile, and has a scantier permanent water supply than northern Palestine. Therefore the tribes resident there, which later constituted the Southern Kingdom of Judah, lived a pastoral, rather than an agricultural life. In consequence their culture remained dominantly pastoral, and as such differed only in degree, but not in essential principle, from what it had been out in the desert. Yahwe-worship, modified only slightly from its desert form, flourished in the south, and religion was inseparable from the other phases and activities of daily life, social, economic, and moral. The example of the Rechabites, while extreme, was nevertheless typical. Not only the religion and mode of worship were thought to have been instituted by Yahwe, and therefore to be pleasing to him, but the entire daily life. The people of the south at first lived the Yahwe-life naturally. Then, as their culture necessarily expanded, they strove consciously to maintain this life. And finally, as their culture developed still further, due largely to intruding foreign influences, and they of necessity outgrew the old, simple standards and modes of existence, they were bidden and urged to continue to live this life, just as it had been lived out in the desert. This was the underlying principle of the prophetic movement, with its uncompromising opposition to all that was new and foreign and smacked of outside, non-Yahwistic religious origin and influence, of royalty and class domination, and with its steadfast approval of all that was rooted in the old desert life,

now, of course, idealized, and with its oft-repeated reference to the desert days as the time when Israel still walked with Yahwe. Jeremiah's commendation of the Rechabites is typical of the general prophetic outlook. It is easily comprehensible why, with the exception of Elijah—himself a shepherd, however—Elisha, and Hosea, all the great prophets sprang from the Southern Kingdom. Manifestly the natural and logical point of departure for the correct, historical study of prophecy in Israel is the early, pre-Canaanite life of the Israelite tribes out in the desert.

The majority of the tribes of Israel, however, settled in northern Palestine. That was the more fertile and attractive part of the country, and was capable of supporting the largest population. It was inevitable that these tribes speedily exchange their nomad, pastoral life for the agricultural. And not only did these northern Israelites have to become farmers, and have to learn the processes of agriculture from the Canaanites, but they had to accept the whole, or practically the whole, of Canaanite agricultural civilization, including religion.

The Canaanite religion, both god-conception and manner of worship, differed radically from that of nomad Israel. With the adoption by the northern tribes of the agricultural life, there began a rapid fusion of the old, simple, pastoral culture with the far more advanced, complex, agricultural, Canaanite culture. Tribal organization and social relations gave way to village and city organization and relations. Unsettled tent abodes yielded to fixed homes, with their more varied and refined mode of living. Established centers of worship, with large and affluent temples, steadily growing bodies of priests and complex rituals superseded the simple, natural desert shrines. And above all else, the agricultural Canaanite trinity of gods claimed the leading place in the reverence and worship of the northern Israelites, which their outgrown desert, tribal god or gods had formerly held.

Not that they yielded their old god or gods and their old culture completely. And not that the resultant culture was entirely without elements surviving from the nomad life. But in every phase of life the agricultural elements predominated. The religion of the northern agricultural tribes was in practice a thinly disguised Canaanite agricultural religion. The name Yahwe was commonly used, but the deity in question was primarily a composite Baal, Astarte, and Adonis. Yahwe was endowed with practically all the powers and attributes of this Canaanite trinity and was expected to discharge practically the same functions and confer the same agricultural blessings. The old Canaanite shrines became the centers of this composite Yahwe-cult, and the old Canaanite religious rites and institutions such as, for example, the three great annual harvest festivals, *Maššōth*, *Kašîr*, and *'Asîf*, became integral parts of Yahwe-worship. Correspondingly outgrown pastoral rites, the *Pesah* festival for example, were gradually relegated to a subordinate position.

This became the religion of the great mass of the people of Israel, against which the prophets protested and strove. In contrast to the religious principles and practices approved by the prophets, which may well be called the prophetic religion, this religion of the masses, largely Canaanite in origin and character, may well be called folk-religion. To understand the prophetic movement aright, we must know not only for what the prophets strove, but also against what they strove. For this folk-religion of northern Israel and, in the prophetic period, of southern Israel also to a marked degree, the point of departure is Canaanite culture and religion.

But the task of reconstructing this Canaanite culture and religion is difficult indeed. The Tel-el-Amarna letters give an excellent insight into political conditions in Palestine in the period prior to the advent of the Israelite tribes, but beyond the names of a few deities, such as Ashirtu, they tell almost nothing of the religious life, and comparatively little of the

economic and social life of the Canaanites. Nor do the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian monuments furnish much more information about the culture of this period. In fact it may be remarked in passing, that for the early, pre-Deuteronomic period of Israel's culture, the Assyrian monuments offer very little information. Even the Hammurapi Code is interesting chiefly in comparison with Old Testament laws and customs. But of direct influence of the Hammurapi Code on pre-Deuteronomic, or even pre-priestly legislation there is little if any evidence. Close and continuous contact of Israel with Assyria and Babylon began only with Hezekiah, and only in the period subsequent to this, and in the late Jahwistic, Deuteronomic, and priestly writings and the works of prophetic writers of this period can decided evidences of preponderating Assyrian-Babylonian influence be found. And only in this comparatively late period did Assyrian-Babylonian culture and religious practice react upon the life of Israel. But for the early period, and especially for the reconstruction of Canaanite culture and religion, Assyrian literature offers little assistance.

Recent excavations in Palestine have brought to light a few monuments of interest and value, such as, for example, sacred standing stones and other equipment of places of worship, and an ancient Canaanite agricultural calendar of the months and seasons. But as yet, the contribution of the excavations to our knowledge of Canaanite religion, though rich in promise, is on the whole comparatively meager.

In the almost total absence of direct sources we must rely upon indirect sources. These are, however, quite ample. The primary source is the Old Testament itself. It is surprising, when we first isolate that which is of unmistakably nomadic origin and then make due allowance for the prophetic or priestly purpose and point of view of the remainder of the biblical material, how much information about Canaanite religious beliefs and practices we can gather. Thus, for

example, the institution of sacred harlotry which, the Bible tells repeatedly, was a part of Baal worship, or rather of the worship of the mother-goddess, was entirely of Canaanite origin. By comparing this institution with parallel manifestations among peoples living upon a corresponding plane of cultural development, and particularly with sacred harlotry among the Babylonians and northwestern Semites and contiguous peoples, we are able to get at the original meaning and purpose of this strange rite, and also to correlate it with other attendant rites. In this way much of Canaanite religious and social belief and practice is established.

Time does not permit consideration of all the elements of Canaanite religion and culture which may be directly elucidated from the Bible. Suffice it to say that all elements of Israelite religion and culture in the pre-Deuteronomic period must have come from one of three sources, either from the desert nomad life before entrance into Palestine, or from Israel's Canaanite predecessors in Palestine, or they were developed spontaneously by Israel itself after its settlement in the land. What is of nomad origin is easily determined. Nor is it difficult to distinguish between that which springs from each of the other two sources. In general it may be affirmed that those cultural elements which Israel possessed by itself, and which had no kindred nor analogous forms in the cultures of neighboring Semitic peoples, were unmistakably of Israelite origin. Thus prophecy, as distinct from divination, was an institution altogether Israelite in character. How prophecy developed out of divination, and the relation of this pre-prophetic divination to divination among other Semitic peoples, is an altogether different subject of investigation. But after thus isolating those elements in Israelite culture and religion which were of nomad origin, or which developed spontaneously in Israel after its settlement in Palestine, there remains very much that is unquestionably Canaanite in origin and character, and which may be used in the reconstruction of Canaanite

culture and religion. And by correlating this judiciously with parallel institutions and practices among other Semitic peoples, we progress further in our task.

Considerable information may be gathered from the little that we know of the religion and culture of the Phoenicians, Aramaeans, and other neighboring and contemporary peoples with whom Israel came into contact in the early period of its history. The Elephantine papyri give a considerable number of Canaanite and early Israelite deity-names. The Greek and Latin writers of the early pre- and post-Christian centuries, notably Herodotus, Lucian, Strabo, Plutarch, and others, likewise offer much that is valuable. For the most part, they describe the Syriac religion and culture of the Hellenic period. But Hellenism was only a thin veneer and the old Semitic religion and culture were but little affected thereby. The deity whose worship Antiochus Epiphanes sought to force upon the Jewish people may have gone by a Greek name; but he was nevertheless the old Canaanite Baal in a slightly altered dress, and his festival upon the twenty-fifth of Kislev was, it can be shown, an old Baal-Astarte-Adonis solstitial festival.

Useful information can also be gathered from the early church fathers, both those who wrote in Greek and Latin and those who wrote in Syriac. The latter particularly, members of the Eastern Church, came into direct contact with the still surviving Syrian religion, which flourished in such centers as Harran until the advent of Islam, and their references to this religion and its practices are most illuminating. Similar references of great scientific value exist in Muslim writers.¹

The descriptions of travelers of the life, manners, and religious practices of the settled, agricultural peoples of the Orient are illuminating, both those of mere passing visitors and of systematic observers such as Curtiss for the peoples of Palestine, Lane for those of Egypt, and Doutté, Westermarck, and others for those of Morocco and neighboring states.

¹ Collected by Chwolsohn in his *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*.

Curtiss has shown conclusively that, just as Hellenism in an earlier period, so Islam in more recent centuries has merely laid a thin veneer upon the religious life of the peoples of the Semitic world. Here, too, there is ceaseless contrast between official, theological religion and folk-religion, between the cult of the mosque and that of the wely. The former is Islam. The latter is to a very large extent nothing but the survival in folk-practice of ancient Canaanite belief and ritual. Even in Egypt and the Berber states this principle holds true. After due allowance is made for ancient Egyptian and Berber elements in the folk-religion of these countries, there remains a large residuum of belief and practice, clearly Semitic in character and obviously related to similar beliefs and practices in other parts of the Semitic world, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and also, though to a less degree, Abyssinia and southern Arabia. All this must be regarded as the survival of ancient Semitic religion. Partly it is of nomadic origin. But in the main it springs directly from agricultural Semitic religion and practice.

It may be objected that this leads rather far afield from specific Canaanite religion. But such is not the case. The ancient Canaanite religion and culture were natural products of the Semitic religious spirit and outlook upon life reacted upon by agricultural environment. The religious beliefs and practices of agricultural Semitic peoples display as marked a uniformity as do the beliefs and practices of nomad Semites. The same god-conceptions, the same rites, the same sacrifices, the same festivals appear among the Babylonians, Canaanites, agricultural Israelites, Syrians, Abyssinians, modern Egyptians, Algerians, and Moroccans. This is hardly due to direct borrowing or transmission, but rather to the same first principles and theories of existence being acted upon by similar agricultural environmental forces and agencies. The Canaanite religion was a typical agricultural Semitic religion. By comparing it with other agricultural Semitic religions, or

with surviving elements of other agricultural Semitic religions, additional material of incalculable value for our study can be gathered.

There remains one source, by no means the least important in the extent and significance of its contributions. I refer to post-biblical Jewish literature, including the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, the New Testament, the Talmud and kindred works, the Midrashic writings, and the compendia of Jewish laws and customs such as the Shulhan Aruk. Many orthodox Jewish practices as, for example, the fasting of the first-born sons and the burning of leaven on the day preceding the Passover can be traced back to Canaanite origins. Furthermore, the ritual of the second Temple contained many elements not provided for, nor even referred to, in any of the biblical codes. For the most part, these were survivals of early Temple practice from the pre-Deuteronomic period, and go back to Canaanite origins. As always, the uncompromising theories and iconoclasm of the prophets eventually resulted in practice in a tacit, and probably largely unconscious, compromise with folk-religion. Thus the dances of the maidens of Jerusalem in the vineyards on the Day of Atonement, about which the Old Testament is silent, but which are described in detail in *Mishna Ta'anith*, IV, 8, and in the *Gemara* to this passage, were the survival of an important rite of the pre-exilic Succoth-New Year festival, originally performed in honor of the Semitic mother-goddess and closely associated with the institution of sacred harlotry.

Likewise the complex ritual of the water-drawing during the Succoth festival, culminating in the peculiar rites upon the seventh day of the festival, is described in detail in *Mishna Succah*, V. The Hebrew codes contain no mention of these rites, and this very silence justifies the inference that the Old Testament authors were conscious of their non-Yahwistic origin and character, and withheld approval of them. The rites were undoubtedly pre-exilic, and survivals of early

Canaanite practice. *Mishna Succah*, V, 4, states that the solar rites described in Ezek. 8:16 were part of these complex ceremonies of the water-drawing on the Succoth festival. In all likelihood, too, Isa. 55:1 ff., "Ho, all ye that thirst, come unto the water,"¹ and also Isa. 50:1 ff., "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," were spoken to the multitude gathered in the Temple at Jerusalem for the celebration of some Succoth festival and the ceremonies of the water-drawing and the accompanying fire rites. We have already begun to appreciate the significance of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha for biblical study. The time is fast approaching when we will recognize equally the value of the talmudic and midrashic literatures.

Finally, as a help in the reconstruction of Canaanite culture and religion, there is the use of anthropological methods and material. By comparing Hebrew and Canaanite rites and institutions with the rites and institutions of peoples living in a similar environment, additional light may be shed upon Canaanite or general Semitic beliefs and practices. But caution must be exercised in the employment of anthropological methods and materials. Only where direct evidence from Semitic sources fails or is insufficient or leaves an otherwise unbridgeable gap in the solution of the problem should recourse be had to the cultures of non-Semitic peoples, unless, as in the case of the Persians, they came into direct contact with Semitic peoples and exchanged cultural possessions with them. To my mind the methods of anthropology are still too vague and inexact and the rules which govern anthropological research and conclusion in general too unsettled to warrant immediate and unqualified acceptance of its findings. The very confusion and disagreement among anthropologists in regard to many of their main problems, such as the relation of magic and religion, the meaning of totemism, and the origin of sacrifice, show the need of conservatism in the employment of the

¹ Cf. John 7:37.

methods and material of this still youthful science. Certainly wherever the necessary material can be drawn from Semitic fields alone, or fields related by historical contact, it should be done. And in most cases this is possible.

With these helps ancient Canaanite culture and religion can be reconstructed fairly completely and systematically and its influence upon Israelite life and thought can be measured and the many religious, economic, and social institutions of ancient Israel which were of Canaanite origin, many of which continued in post-exilic Judaism and some of which survive in Jewish practice still today, can be determined. The process is reciprocal. Many otherwise obscure biblical passages are thus illumined and, in return, this increased knowledge of the Old Testament opens up paths to new knowledge of Canaanite and Israelite culture.

As has been said, with the reign of Hezekiah, Israel—or what remained of Israel—came into contact with Assyria and Babylonia direct and unbroken for almost two centuries. For the correct understanding of this period and interpretation of its literature, a knowledge of Babylonian life, religion, and literature is indispensable. In this period the worship of Ishtar, the “queen of heaven,” denounced by Zephaniah and Jeremiah, entered into Israelite folk-religion. In this period, too, Babylonian myths and legends such as the flood story, the legend of the pre-diluvian patriarchs, and the creation story made their way into Israelite literature. Toward the close of this period Babylonian religious elements likewise entered into the cult of the Priestly Code. Due also to this contact with distant and mightier nations and the consequent broadening of horizon, a marked tendency toward universalism manifested itself in Israelite thought, found literary expression in the Jahwist portions of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, and culminated in the preachment of Deutero-Isaiah.

With the close of the exile came the Persian period and Persian cultural and religious influence. By this time,

however, due to the priestly movement beginning with Ezekiel, or even with the Deuteronomic reformation, and culminating in the Priestly Code, Judaism had become well defined, and its practice or cult fairly well fixed. In consequence, Persia did not influence Jewish religion as did Babylonia. Persian elements in the religious practice of Judaism are few indeed. But Persian influence upon Jewish religious thought and theology was far-reaching; witness, for example, the unmistakably Persian character of Jewish angelology and the developing figure of Satan in Jewish literature.

This was followed by the Hellenic period. But, as said before, this was no pure Hellenism. It was rather Hellenic thought, philosophy, and art linked with a peculiar Syriac culture and religion, in which Persian, or Babylonian-Persian, elements were conspicuously present. Due largely to Chasidism and to the Maccabean wars, this Hellenic influence was combated quite successfully. The religious practice of Judaism was but little affected by it, although it did give to Judaism one old Syriac or Canaanite solstitial festival, *Chanukah*, the "feast of lights." In the realm of thought and theology, however, its influence was far-reaching, and paved the way for the doctrines of sin, atonement, retribution, future life, and others.¹ This Hellenic period saw the close of Old Testament literature and the beginning of apocryphal and rabbinic literatures.

In fact the Hellenic and rabbinic periods overlap. No hard and fast line of demarcation can be drawn between the authors of the secondary strata of the Priestly Code and the scribes and other leaders of the Great Synod,² the first of the long line of rabbinical teachers who evolved the oral law, recorded in the Mishna, Gemara, and kindred works. Undoubtedly the *soferim*, the scribes, and the other *'anshe k'neseth hagg'dola*,

¹ Cf. Kohler, *Jewish Theology*.

² Cf. Lauterbach, "Midrash and Mishna," *Jewish Quarterly Review* (new series), V and VI (1915); and my "The Sources of the Creation Story," *AJSL*, XXXVI (1920), 169-212, and especially 176, n. 1.

the men of the Great Synod, were the very authors of much of these latest strata of the Priestly Code. Such laws as "You shall kindle no fire in your homes on the Sabbath day" (Exod. 35:3) significantly anticipate the minute provisions of rabbinic legislation. It must have been these same scribes who, by virtue of the authority which they enjoyed in their day, closed the Pentateuchal canon. This act marked the beginning of the oral law and of the eventual talmudic literature. Again we see that no hard and fast line can be drawn between biblical and post-biblical literature and life, that the entire Bible is only a part of the national literature of Israel, and gives but a cross-section picture of the life of ancient Israel. Rabbinic literature is the sequel, or rather the next volume, and is in turn followed by other volumes and the story of Israel is not yet complete. And just as one volume of a large, comprehensive work cannot be properly understood without reference to the other volumes and without correlation with the full story or history or scientific discussion of which it records a part, so too the Bible cannot be completely nor correctly understood and interpreted without appreciating in full measure that it is merely the first volume in the life-story of Israel and Judaism, and without reconstructing as fully as possible, with the help of every available source, the life of Israel in all the periods of its history, biblical and post-biblical, and in all the stages of each period, nomadic, agricultural, commercial, exilic, and post-exilic, and interpreting the Old Testament from the standpoint of this life. In the final analysis, textual criticism and documentary hypothesis are merely means to an end and that end is the correct, historical, constructive interpretation of the Bible and the application of the knowledge thus gained to our own religious problems and life today. This is the standpoint from which, in this age of comparisons, of comparative religion, comparative folk-lore, comparative racial psychology, in other words, in this age of anthropological research, we are constrained to study the

Old Testament and to apprehend the new and stimulating truths it discloses, and to use them for the readjustment of our own religious beliefs and observances in order that we, of this generation and the generations which shall come after, may advance still farther in the knowledge of God and of the true purpose and beauty of life, the real goal of all religious thinking and striving.

Just this is the aim of Hebrew archaeology in this newest and broadest phase. In all our study and in all our teaching we should never lose sight of this ultimate fact. Perhaps it is a truism to say this. But, after all, truisms are the truest truths. And at times we fail to see the forest because of the trees; and quite as often we fail to see the trees because of the forest. The full truth consists in seeing and comprehending both trees and forest together.